

**A GUIDE FOR PREPARING  
GREENWAY CORRIDOR STUDIES OR PLANS  
FOR THE CREEKS OF NEWPORT NEWS**



**NEWPORT NEWS  
PLANNING DEPARTMENT  
JUNE 2003**

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FOR THE CREEKS OF NEWPORT NEWS**

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Prepared by the  
City of Newport News

**Planning Department**  
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June 2003

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## Introduction

The intended use of this document is twofold. First, it is a guide for the development of other water quality improvement and greenway plans for the creeks of Newport News. Second, it can be a guide for other communities as well. You, the reader, will have the benefit of all the positive and negative lessons staff learned during the process of developing the City's first water quality improvement greenway plan.

## Getting Elected Officials and City Administration on Board

Before beginning your greenway plan it is important to have the elected officials and city administration on board to do the plan. Newport News was fortunate because our 1993 and 2001 adopted comprehensive plans established the policy of preparing greenway plans for the City's creeks. In our 2001 comprehensive plan we reinforced and strengthened opportunities for greenways by relating the water quality improvement strategies contained in the comprehensive plan to the existing greenway development recommendations. Afterwards, we advised the City Council by informational memo that we were beginning the greenway planning process for Stoney Run and that the first property owner meeting was to be held on a particular date. (See Appendix A-1.)

If greenways and water quality improvement are not a part of your current comprehensive plan, recommend an amendment to the comprehensive plan either before or concurrent with the greenway/water quality improvement planning process.

- ❖ Make development of greenway plans and water quality improvement strategies a part of your comprehensive plan.
- ❖ Communicate with your city administration and elected officials when you begin the process, and when you start the citizen participation process.

## Getting Started



To get started on the project a work plan or work program is advisable. A work plan establishes milestones in order to complete the project in a timely fashion. It gives you the structure to organize your thoughts and help you make decisions. The remainder of this section discusses the types of decisions that the planning staff made when they developed the work plan for the Stoney Run Water Quality Improvement Greenway Plan, to be known as the "the Plan" for the remainder of the document.

The planning staff created a skeletal work plan as part of a grant application to obtain funding from the Chesapeake Bay Local Assistance Department for the project. However, when the project began, a more comprehensive work plan was developed to guide the process (See appendix A-2). Descriptions of the steps that we took in getting the project started are below.

**Step 1. Who should be on the project team?** In Newport News Planning Department we have a Senior Environmental Planner who took the lead as project coordinator and primary author of the plan. Because the project dealt with storm water quality issues, the City's Engineering Department Stormwater Division staff was involved from the beginning. There was a possibility of using portions of the greenway for passive recreation; thus, staff from the City's Department of Recreation was included on the team. For staff support and information resources you should utilize State agencies where possible. City planning staff invited representatives from the Virginia Institute of Marine Science to come to our second public meeting to address questions from the general public that local staff were unable to respond to at the first public meeting. They also were included on a few staff level meetings to answer our questions.

- ❖ Do a work plan to get organized and refer to it often.
- ❖ Select a project team.
- ❖ Determine the project area boundaries.
- ❖ Map existing conditions using GIS and ArcView software.

**Step 2.** Concurrent with the selection of the project team you should determine the project area. The City of Newport News limited the size of the project area to the properties adjacent to Stoney Run creek impacted by the city's Chesapeake Bay Preservation Area, which includes the tidal and portions of non-tidal Stoney Run. Because the City's stormwater management program focuses on reducing non-point source pollution throughout the entire developed watershed of Stoney Run, confining the plan to a limited area made more sense. However, the information contained in our plan can be included in a larger watershed plan if so desired in the future.

**Step 3.** Determine the types of maps that you will need to develop for the project and when they will be completed. Put this information in the work plan. Planning staff decided that the maps for the existing conditions in the plan area would be: topography, sensitive soils, tidal and non-tidal wetlands, existing land use, the 100-year floodplain impact, and the Chesapeake Bay Preservation Area impact. Planning staff determined that watershed level

maps were needed to describe water quality in the creek. The following information was mapped at the watershed level: land use, year structures were built and stormwater outfall locations. Newport News has the data layers for these maps in the City's Geographic Information System (GIS). Therefore, Arcview Maps were created for these data layers in the project area. It is suggested that the maps of existing conditions in the plan area be prepared for the first adjacent property owner meeting.

**Step 4. When do you hold the first kick-off informational meeting for local staff? What information do you present? Who do you invite? The preceding questions are basic ones that must be answered before the informational meeting is held. Based on our experience, it is best to hold the informational meeting after the following items have been completed:**

- Steps 1 through 3 under the section **Getting Started** above.
- The date of the first community meeting has been scheduled and a room reserved.
- A draft letter of invitation for property owners has been prepared.
- A draft agenda for the first community meeting has been prepared.

- ❖ Hold a kick-off staff informational meeting.
- ❖ Invite selected team members and city management.
- ❖ Discussion topics:
  - 1) Basis for doing the project,
  - 2) Property owner invitation letter,
  - 3) Agenda of first property owner meeting.

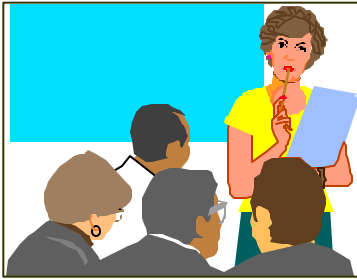
Now, prepare your invitation list to your kick-off meeting. Invite one or two representatives from the city departments that you identified under Step 1 under the section **Getting Started** above as well as a representative from city management. Our informational meeting included:

- One representative from the Parks and Recreation department,
- The Assistant Director of Engineering and a representative from the City's Stormwater Division of Engineering,
- The Director of Planning and Development, the Manager of Comprehensive Planning, two additional Planning Division staff and the Project Coordinator also from planning, and,
- The Assistant City Manager over the Department of Planning and Development.

Prepare an agenda for the informational meeting that will convey the reasons for the project, get staff reactions regarding the draft

**agenda for the first community meeting and the draft invitation letter for the property owners. Also hand out a map of the project area. (See Appendix A-3 for sample agenda and handout.)**

## **Getting Property Owner Participation in the Process**



**For the “Plan” (and for similar future plans for the other creeks in Newport News) property owner participation was and will be a key element in its development and future implementation. It is a key element because without ownership in the process of developing the plan, its successful implementation through voluntary efforts of the creek’s adjacent property owners is doomed. So, what method or methods are recommended to get property owners involved? The city of Newport News used the community meeting method initially, and only invited those property owners that would be directly impacted by the resulting recommendations of the plan. Other methods of involvement, discussed below, grew out of the initial adjacent property owner meeting. The steps that were taken by planning staff in preparing to use the adjacent property owner meeting method follow.**

**Step 1. The minimum number of property owner meetings and community wide meetings to be scheduled was determined during the preparation of the work plan. In the work plan, we identified three property owner meetings with a specific purpose for each in mind. The purpose behind the first meeting was threefold: to get the concerns of the adjacent property owners identified, tell the property owners what the concerns of the City were, and generally educate the property owners regarding the known existing conditions of the natural environment of the project area. The purpose of the second meeting was to present and arrive at an agreement on the goals, policies, and implementation recommendations resolving the concerns of both the property owners and the City. The purpose of the third meeting was to present and arrive at consensus on the resulting final document at a community wide meeting.**

- ❖ Have at least three citizen meetings.
  1. First one for citizen and locality concerns.
  2. Second one to reach consensus on goals, policies and strategies.
  3. Third one to present the draft plan for review and comment.
- ❖ Notify citizens of meetings through letter or advertisement which ever is appropriate for audience.
- ❖ Use GIS to create property owner address list.

**The city of Newport News went into the first meeting calling the project a study instead of a plan. Planning staff wanted the idea**

of a plan to evolve out of the study, becoming a step in the process to implement the goals, policies and strategies of the study.

**Step 2.** How should you notify the property owners? We decided to invite the 805 property owners adjacent to tidal Stoney Run to the first three meetings, a form letter was developed and sent (See Appendix A-3 and Appendix A-4). For the community-wide meeting, an advertisement was placed in the local newspaper as well as sending a form letter to the adjacent property owners. (See Appendix A-4 and Appendix A-5.)

**Step 3.** What method or methods can you use to develop a list of property owner's addresses? The City of Newport News recommends the use of a GIS. If your City's real estate assessment information is in a computerized database and is cross referenced with your Geographic Information System by tax identification number as Newport News's is, it is very easy to obtain a database listing in a computerized spreadsheet format for the project area. The address labels are then generated from the computerized spreadsheet.

What knowledge did the city gain during its citizen participation process?

First, we discerned that we should have invited the specialists from the State agencies and our local Wetlands Board staff to the very first property owner meeting. There were many questions about dredging the navigable portion of the creek, water quality, and wildlife nuisance issues. As a result, city staff invited the specialists to the second adjacent property owner meeting.

Second, we recognized that some individuals living adjacent to the creek were already doing positive things for the environment, e.g., removing trash from the creek on a routine basis, and shoreline erosion control improvements. These individuals came together to form a group known as Friends of Stoney Run. One of them kayaked up the creek and took digital photos of the existing conditions and presented some ideas in a written report. Staff used several of his photos in a presentation to the second adjacent property owner meeting, and in the plan document itself.

Third, we acknowledged that to keep interest in the plan alive among the Friends of Stoney Run and other interested property owners we should have finished writing the plan in a minimum of three months after the

- ❖ Invite the outside experts to your first citizen meeting.
- ❖ Take advantage of the offers of help from interested citizens adjacent to the creek.
- ❖ Give technical support to citizen generated Friends of "creek name" groups that form.
- ❖ Finish plan in timely fashion to maintain interest.



**second adjacent property owner meeting. Instead writing the plan took nine months to complete because of the heavy workload of the planning staff involved in the project. Based on this experience, the city planning staff, and other localities that may read this document, might consider using a staff person dedicated to the project or hiring a consultant to do this type of project.**

**Getting the Plan Document Organized**

**Establish the focus of the plan document. This focus is initially identified as part of the project work plan and becomes the plan document title.**

**Obtain copies of similar plans from other communities. It cannot be stressed enough how helpful it is to look at plans developed by other communities to get ideas regarding the plan document organization and elements to be included. Newport News staff found the Internet to be a good source for finding example plan documents. A list of other community plans that city staff referred to is found in Appendix A-6.**

**Prior to writing the plan, determine whom the audience is that the plan is trying to reach. In the case of Newport News, the audience is property owners adjacent to the creek, the general public, the Chesapeake Bay Local Assistance Department and Newport News city management and staff.**

- ❖ The focus of the plan should be obtained from the work plan.
- ❖ Review similar plans from other communities.
- ❖ Refer to the work plan, other community plans and adjacent property owner minutes to outline contents of the plan.
- ❖ Determine the audience for the plan before writing the document.

**Based on a review of other community plans, knowledge of typical elements found in a greenway plan document, and minutes from adjacent property owner meetings the City organized the “Plan” document in five sections. The five sections are: Introduction, Existing Conditions, Concerns/Issues and Solutions, Recommendations and implementation actions that address the issues and problems, and Implementation Action Plan. A brief description of the topics covered in the five sections follows.**

**Section 1: Introduction**

**Items to be discussed in the introduction should be: why you are doing the plan in the first place, what the benefits of the plan are, and where the study area is in relation to the rest of the community. The introduction for the “Plan” includes the following sections: basis in the comprehensive plan, functions and benefits of greenways, and Stoney Run historical context.**

## Section 2: Existing Conditions

**Existing conditions should provide the underpinnings for the plan and give sufficient information to the general public. The discussion of existing conditions was divided into the watershed and the plan area. As the water quality aspects of the “Plan” deal with the effect of the built environment on the natural environment the following topics were discussed at the watershed level: timing of development, pollutant loadings related to land use and stormwater outfall location, and the water quality of the Warwick River. At the plan area level specific natural environment topics were discussed, such as: topography, tidal and non-tidal wetlands, sensitive soils, floodplain, and the Chesapeake Bay Preservation Area. Information on the topics, included for discussion in the “Plan”, was readily available from existing sources.**

**An inventory of flora and fauna in the plan area was not included under existing conditions, but is recommended as part of a baseline study to be performed as part of a monitoring plan.**

## Section 3: Concerns/Issues and Solutions

**Based on the public participation process, generate a list of issues and concerns to be addressed by the plan. The “Plan’s” issues and concerns were in the areas of water quality, bank and shoreline erosion, public access, and stormwater management. The adjacent property owners who generated solutions to address their issues and concerns assisted City staff.**

## Section 4: Recommendations and implementation actions that address the issues and problems

**The recommendations of the “Plan” are:**

- **Reduce the amount of trash, litter, and other solid waste in the creek.**
- **Reduce the nitrogen and phosphorous pollutant loads.**
- **Reduce the stream bank erosion.**
- **Protect existing and provide additional wildlife habitat.**
- **Provide for Additional Public Access and Recreational Opportunities where appropriate.**
- **Develop public relations/education program in support of implementation efforts.**
- **Develop a monitoring plan to assess the effectiveness of the Stoney Run Greenway Corridor Plan.**

**The supporting activities for the recommendations were generated from citizen and staff solutions.**

#### Section 5: Implementation Action Plan

**The Implementation Action Plan was included as a result of looking at other community's stream protection plans and studies. It appears to be an effective way to identify the implementation actions to be implemented creek wide and those implementation actions to be implemented in a particular creek segment.**

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## APPENDIX

- A-1 Informational memorandum to City Council
- A-2 Work Program
- A-3 Agenda staff coordination meeting and handouts
- A-4 Letter of invitation to adjacent property owners
- A-5 Newspaper advertisement for community meeting
- A-6 List of community plans and documents used as resources

## CITY OF NEWPORT NEWS

March 26, 2002

**TO:** The Honorable City Council

**FROM:** City Manager

**SUBJECT:** 2002 CBLAD Grant Project

The purpose of this memo is to advise you that the Department of Planning and Development is about to embark on their 2002 CBLAD Grant Project, titled Stoney Run Water Quality Improvement Greenway Corridor Project. Based on the funded grant proposal and the *Framework for the Future*, Chapter 6, New Strategy 3.1.4, the project will address at a minimum the establishment or preservation of riparian buffer, public access impacts and opportunities, possible water use conflicts in the navigable portion of Stoney Run, bank and shoreline erosion concerns, and existing development in the flood plain and Chesapeake Bay Preservation Area Resource Protection Area. Appropriate City staff from the Departments of Engineering and Parks and Recreation will be involved as well.

The first meeting for property owners living adjacent to the creek is scheduled for April 10, 2002 at 7:00 P.M. in the Mary Passage Middle School cafeteria. A letter explaining the project and inviting property owners to the meeting is being mailed the week of April 1, 2002.

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Ed Maroney

EM:kj

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## A-2

### STONEY RUN WATER QUALITY IMPROVEMENT GREENWAY PLAN WORK PROGRAM October 9, 02

	<b>TIME FRAME</b>	<b>CITY DEPARTMENT OR OTHER AGENCY</b>
<b>A. Prepare Base Map</b>	Oct.-Dec. 2001	Dept. of Plan. and Dev. And Mapping Office
<b>B. Inventory Built Environment Conditions of Greenway</b>	Oct.-Dec. 2001	Dept. of Plan. and Dev. And Mapping Office
1. Prepare Land Ownership Map	" "	" "
2. Prepare Land use Inventory (Map and Table)	" "	" "
3. Prepare Zoning Inventory (Map and Table)	" "	" "
4. Identify Historic Resources/Landmarks	Nov.-Dec. 2001	Consultant
<b>C. Inventory Natural Environment Conditions of greenway</b>	Oct.-Dec. 2001	Dept. of Plan. and Dev. And Mapping Office
1. Identify Chesapeake Bay Preservation Area	" "	" "
2. Identify structures built in the 100-year floodplain	" "	" "
3. Identify the steep slopes and erodible soils	" "	" "
4. Identify tidal and non-tidal wetlands	" "	" "
5. Identify Endangered Species/Habitat Preservation	Dec. 01-Jan. 02	Consultant
<b>D. Prepare written description of existing greenway conditions.</b>	Dec. 01 - Jan. 02	Dept. of Plan. and Dev.
<b>E. Public Meeting #1</b>		
1. Discuss Water Quality Issues and Environmental Issues and recreational opportunities.	April-02	Dept. of Plan. and Dev. Dept. of Eng. Stormwater Division
2. Identify property Owner Concerns	" "	" "

3. Discuss appropriate mechanisms for addressing concerns/issues, such as a water quality strategy /greenway plan for Stony Run	" "	" "
4. Determine the interest in creating a Friends of Stony Run	" "	" "
<b>F. Public Meeting #2</b>		
1. Identify general Goals for water quality improvement of Stony Run	June 2002	Dept. of Plan. and Dev. Dept. of Eng. Stormwater Division
2. Identify specific implementation objectives, such as; wetlands that could be restored, restoration of functional floodplain, restoration of buffer.	" "	" "
3. Identify possible funding sources for implementation.	" "	" "
<b>G. Prepare draft of the water quality improvement /greenway plan</b>	July - Sept. 2002	Dept. of Plan. and Dev. Dept. of Eng. Stormwater Division
1. Internal Review by City Staff	Sept. 2002	
2. Review by CBLAD Staff	Oct. 2002	
<b>H. Revise draft of the water quality improvement/greeway plan.</b>	Nov. 2002-. 2003	
<b>I. Present Draft Water Quality Improvement/ Greenway Plan</b>		
1. Friends of Stony Run	Dec. 2002	Dept. of Plan. and Dev. Dept. of Eng. Stormwater Division
2. City Planning Commission	Dec. 2002	Dept. of Plan. and Dev.
3. City Council Work Session	Dec. 2002	Dept. of Plan. and Dev. Dept. of Eng. Stormwater Division
4. City Council Meeting	Jan. 2002	Dept. of Plan. and Dev.
<b>J. Prepare "generic" or model approach guide</b>	Oct.- Dec. 2002	Dept. of Plan. and Dev.



## **A-3**

### **STONEY RUN WATER QUALITY IMPROVEMENT/GREENWAY CORRIDOR PROJECT STAFF COORDINATION MEETING**

#### **AGENDA**

1. Identify the project area.
2. Work Program submitted to CBLAD with grant extension request.  
What has been accomplished so far?
3. Stoney Run adjacent property owner meeting April 10, 2002.  
Distribute copy of draft letter to be sent to property owners.  
Changes?  
Distribute copy of draft agenda for the meeting. Changes?
4. Help needed from other Departments.

**Stoney Run Water Quality Improvement/Greenway  
Corridor Study  
Adjacent Property Owner Meeting  
Mary Passage Middle School Cafeteria  
Wednesday, April 10, 2002  
7:00 P.M.**

**AGENDA**

**7:00 P.M. to 7:15 P.M. - Property owner view maps**

Welcome and Introductions  
Background

Basis in the *Framework for the Future* comprehensive plan.  
Chesapeake Bay Local Assistance Department Grant funding.  
Purpose of the Study

Overview /Discussion

Study Limits

Study Issues

1. Water Quality
2. Streamside Vegetative Buffer
3. Bank/Shoreline Erosion
4. Existing development in floodplain
5. Existing development in Resource Protection Area of the  
Chesapeake Bay Preservation Area
6. Water Use conflicts in navigable portion of Stoney Run
7. Public Access Concerns

Property Owner Comments/Discussion of Issues

Next Steps

Adjourn

For further information or comments please contact:

Kathy James-Webb  
Senior District Planner  
926-8075  
Kjames-webb@nngov.com

## A-3

March 26, 2002

Ladies/Gentlemen:

The purpose of this letter is to invite you to a meeting on Wednesday, April 10 at 7:00 P.M. in the cafeteria of Mary Passage Middle School to learn about the Stoney Run Water Quality Improvement/Greenway Study. This study has its genesis in the *Framework for the Future* the City's comprehensive plan and was subsequently funded by a grant from the Chesapeake Bay Local Assistance Department. As an adjacent property owner, we want you to help us improve the environment in your Stoney Run Basin.

We look forward to seeing you.

Sincerely,

Paul F. Miller  
Director

PFM:kej

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Copy to: Assistant City Manager, NAM  
Manager of Comprehensive Planning  
Senior District Planner, KEJ

June 18, 2002

Ladies/Gentlemen:

The purpose of this letter is to invite you to our second meeting on Thursday, June 27, 2002 at 7:00 P.M. in the cafeteria of Mary Passage Middle School regarding the Stoney Run Water Quality Improvement/Greenway Study. I have enclosed a copy of a tentative agenda, minutes of our last meeting, and a location map for the meeting.

The City staff gained valuable information regarding your issues and concerns regarding Stoney Run at our last meeting. As an adjacent property owner, your continued participation in the study is essential to determine the goals and policies for the future water quality improvement greenway plan for Stoney Run.

If you have questions regarding this mailing, please contact Kathy James-Webb by phone at 926-8075 or by email at [Kathy James-Webb@ci.newport-news.va.us](mailto:Kathy James-Webb@ci.newport-news.va.us)

We look forward to seeing you.

Sincerely,

Paul F. Miller  
Director

PFM:kej

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Enclosure

Copy to: Assistant City Manager, NAM  
Manager of Comprehensive Planning  
Senior District Planner, KEJ

**A-4**

April 28, 2003

Ladies/Gentlemen:

The purpose of this letter is to invite you to the first community wide meeting on Wednesday, May 7, 2003 at 7:00 P.M. in the cafeteria of Mary Passage Middle School located at 400 Atkinson Way (map enclosed). The purpose of the meeting is to present the final draft of the Stoney Run Greenway Corridor Plan. This plan is based on the information obtained from two adjacent property owner meetings held in April and June of 2002 as well as additional research done by city staff. As of May 2, 2003, the draft plan will be found in the City's Libraries and the City's website <http://www.nngov.com>. Once you enter the website select Departments and Agencies and then select Planning.

If you have questions regarding this mailing, please contact Kathy James-Webb by phone at 926-8075 or by email at [kjames-webb@nngov.com](mailto:kjames-webb@nngov.com).

We look forward to seeing you.

Sincerely,

Al Riutort  
Director

AR:kj

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Enclosure

Copy to: Assistant City Manager, NM  
Assistant Director of Engineering, EW  
Senior Engineer, BL  
Environmental Scientist, CD

## **A-5**

### **NOTICE OF PUBLIC MEETING STONEY RUN GREENWAY CORRIDOR PLAN**

The City of Newport News will hold a public meeting on Wednesday, May 7, 2003 at 7:00 p.m. in the cafeteria of Mary Passage Middle School located at 400 Atkinson Way. The purpose of the meeting is to present the Stoney Run Greenway Corridor Plan and address questions. The project area for the Stoney Run Greenway Corridor Plan includes properties along Stoney Run creek from the Warwick River to the CSX railroad tracks. A copy of the plan can be viewed at the City's Libraries, and the Planning Department and on the City's web site <http://www.nngov.com>. Once you enter the web site select Departments and Agencies and then select Planning Department.

The City's Department's of Planning and Engineering will be present to listen and respond to the community's comments. Interested parties are invited to attend the public meeting.

If you are disabled and will require an accommodation in order to participate in the meeting, please call the Department of Planning at least three days in advance of the meeting at 926-8761.

To be advertised: Daily Press - **Sunday, May 4, 2003**

Box retail ad 2 X 4, or appropriate, back page of local section.

1 Certified Copy Requested  
Bill to acct# 008350005  
PROOF REQUESTED

## A-6

### LIST OF COMMUNITY PLANS AND DOCUMENTS USED AS RESOURCES

- 1) Fairfax County Stream Protection Strategy Baseline Study, Prepared by Fairfax Department of Public Works and Environmental Services, January 2001.
- 2) Longfellow Creek Habitat Restoration Master Plan, prepared for Seattle, WA by URS Greiner Woodward Clyde, January 20 1999.
- 3) Stream Corridor Restoration: Principals, Processes and Practices, by The Federal Interagency Stream Restoration Working Group, published October 1998 and revised August 2001.
- 4) Greenways a Guide to Planning Design and Development, Charles A. Flink and Robert M. Searns, the Conservation Fund, 1993.
- 5) Greenways for America, Charles E. Little, The John Hopkins University Press, 1990.
- 6) Lake Barcroft: Urban Best Management Practices, by GKY and Associates for the Lake Barcroft Watershed Improvement District, August 2002